



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
***MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT***  
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION  
*HISTORIC PRESERVATION*

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**STEP 2: DETERMINATION of whether to PREFERABLY PRESERVE**

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**Site:** 55 Heath Street – Carriage Barn only  
**Case:** HPC.DMO 2020-11

**Applicant Name:** Lynne Thompson  
**Owner Name:** same as applicant

**HPC Hearing Date:** May 19, 2020  
**Agent:** Cynthia Sherman



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**I. MEETING SUMMARY: Determination of Significance**

On Tuesday, June 23, 2020, the HPC voted the *carriage barn* at 55 Heath Street to be historically significant (Criterion “B” Historical & Architectural Significance). The HPC noted that, despite the alterations to include garage bays, the main portion of this structure retains its integrity of form as a carriage barn and noted its Italianate architecture.

**II. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

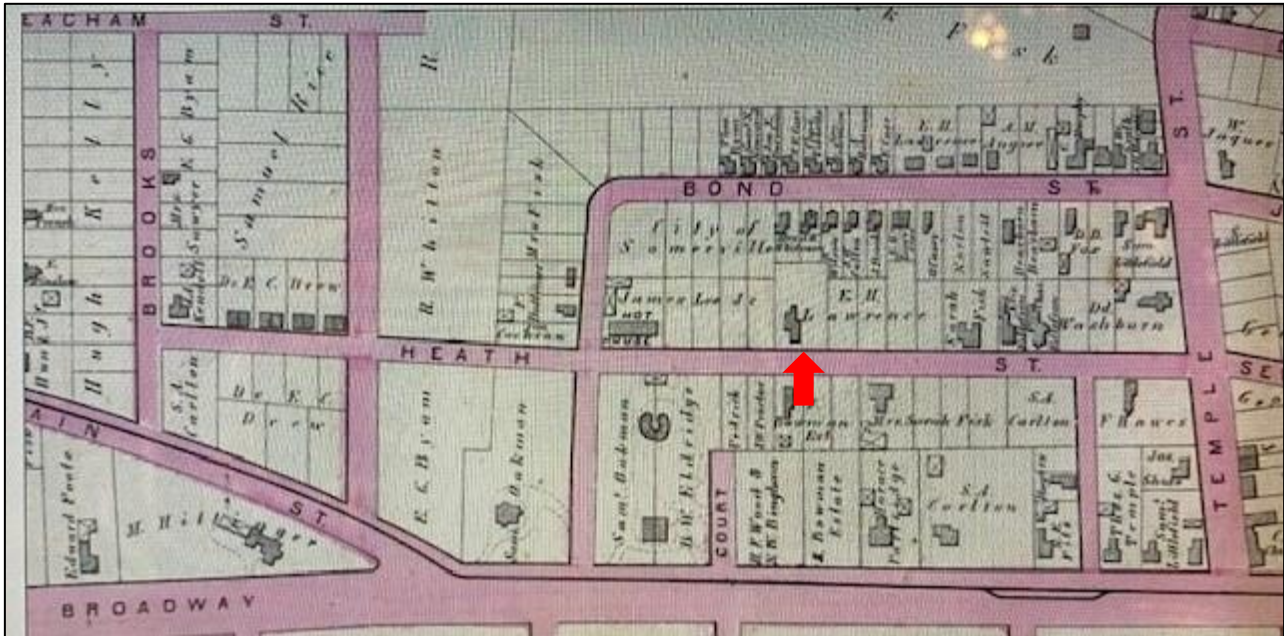
Since the June 23, 2020 HPC meeting, additional information regarding the property has been discovered from census data, Somerville City Directories, along with Bromley plate, Hopkins plate, and Sanborn map research. This information appears below and in the attached spreadsheet.

Due to this additional research, the period of significance of the carriage barn has been changed from beginning c.1850-60 to beginning c.1874-1884. The following pages provide explanation.

The earliest map available to Staff shows the existing house on the property as of 1874, but there is no barn yet present. Given that this is the only dwelling house built on a large piece of land owned by a single owner, it is possible that the structure was built as a single residence and was not intended to be laborer housing. Irrespective of the latter, the property on which the barn resides

today was

part of a large tract of land, divided into parcels, owned by E.H. Lawrence. At the time that this Hopkins plate was made in 1874, Fenwick Street had not yet been laid out and Bond Street curved into what is today part of Jacques Street.



Above, Hopkins Plate I, 1874. The dwelling house remains at 55 Heath Street today. The parcel is one of the largest on this side of the street. The rear property line for this and one other parcel owned by E.H. Lawrence extend further toward the lower portion of (the then) Bond Street than any other parcels on this side of Heath Street.

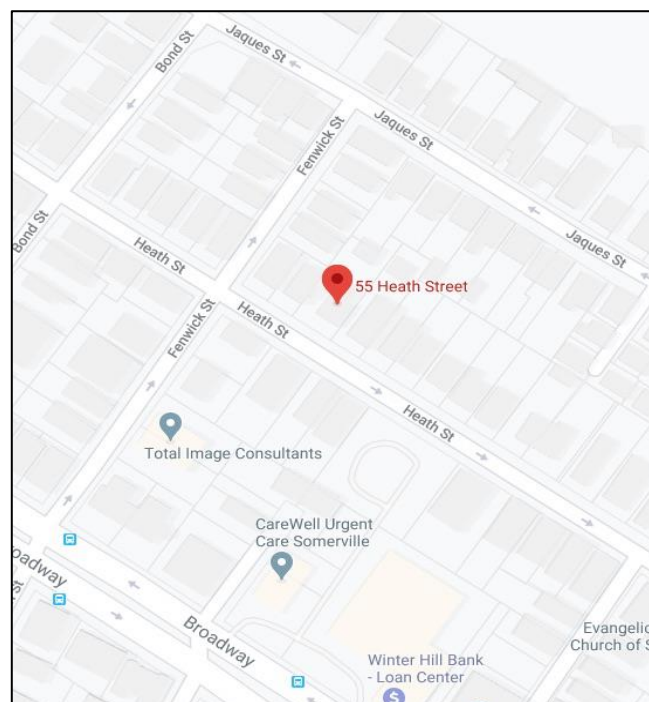
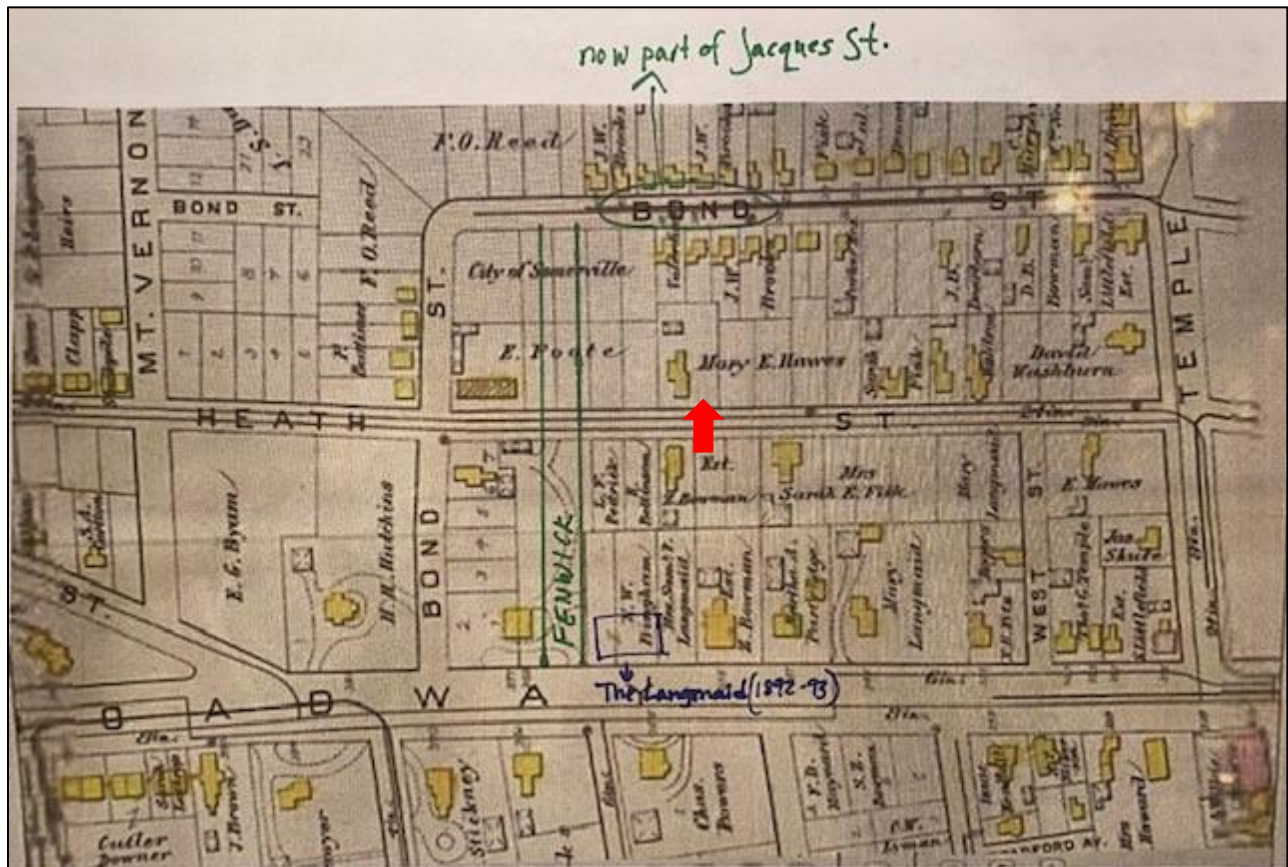
By 1884, as the Hopkins plate below shows, the ownership of the tract of land has changed to Mary E. Hawes and the barn has been built behind the dwelling house. The rectangle with an “x” on the Hopkins plates indicate stables, which is how the carriage barn at 55 Heath has been marked.



Above, Hopkins Plate 011, 1884

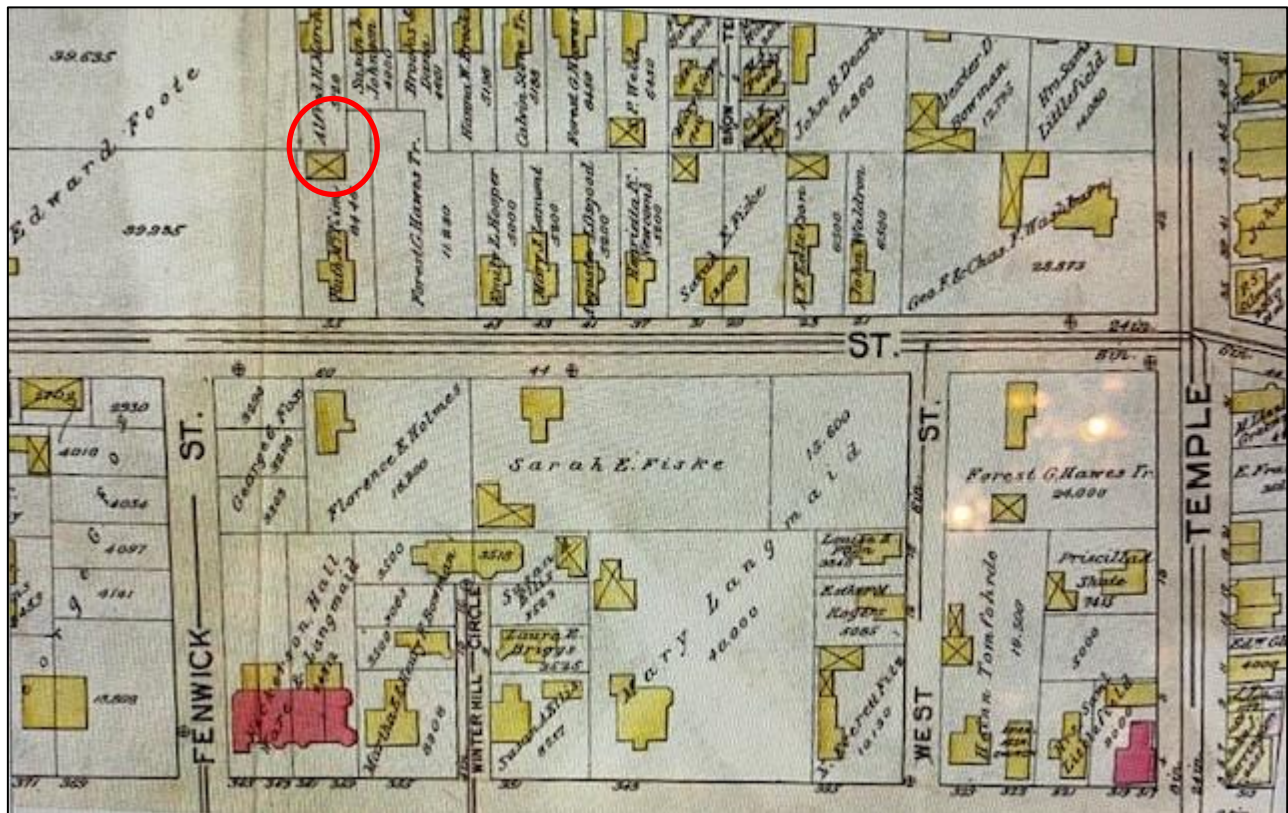


Without Fenwick Street as a means of orientation, it can seem difficult to determine if the property shown on the 1884 Hopkins plate is 55 Heath Street. In the images below of the 1884 Hopkins plate, Staff shows the rough location of today's Fenwick Street through to Jacques (formerly a portion of Bond St.). The two parcels to the left of 55 Heath Street can be seen. Those two parcels each contain dwelling houses today from the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A Google map image of 55 Heath Street today is shown immediately below the marked-up 1874 Hopkins. Staff is confident that these two are the same property.



Between the 1884 Hopkins plate and the 1895 Bromley map below, Fenwick Street had partially been laid out, but it terminated at its intersection with Heath Street. Today's Fenwick Street has been extended such that it terminates with Jacques Street (formerly a portion of Bond Street as shown in the 1874 Hopkins plate). The 1895 Bromley plate shows a shorter Fenwick, The Langmaid (1892-1893) at its right corner with Broadway. 55 Heath Street is shown owned by Ruth McKim. Ruth McKim is confirmed in census data as living at 55 Heath Street. The remaining parcels of the land owned by Mary E. Hawes have been sold and all but one contains a dwelling house.

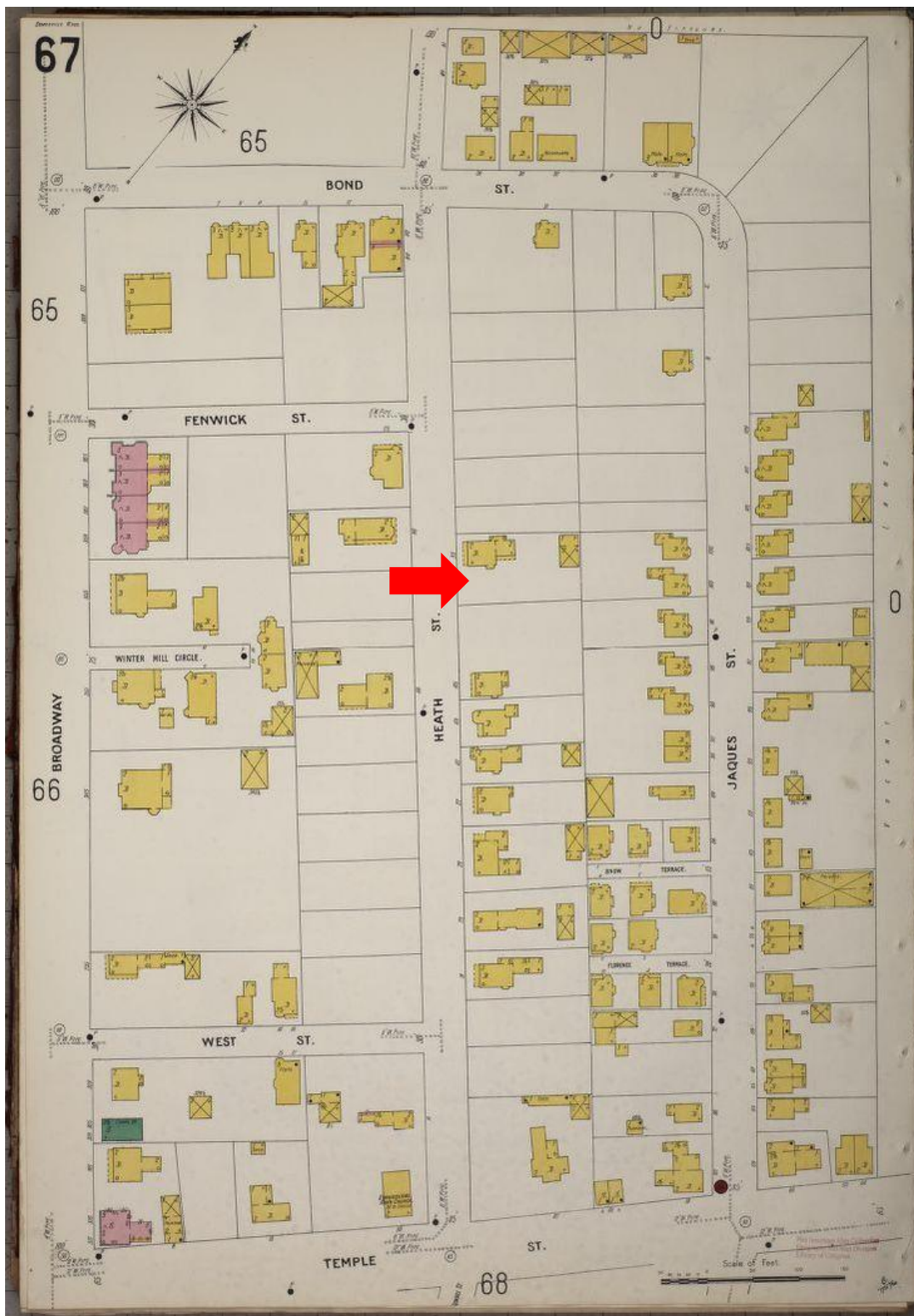
The carriage barn remains in the same location as shown in the 1884 Hopkins plate, but the rear property line has been brought closer to the barn. A change in property line can be the result of numerous circumstances from the sale of a portion of property to a land dispute.



*Above, Bromley plate 012, 1895. Fenwick Street terminates at its intersection with Heath. 55 Heath Street is now owned by Ruth McKim. A portion of the rear property line has been brought closer in to the carriage barn.*

The Sanborn Fire Insurance map below shows 55 Heath Street and with its barn. The yellow coloration of buildings indicate that they are wood-framed and the "x" on the structure at the rear of 55 Heath Street indicates that it is a stable.





Above, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1900. Wood-framed dwelling house and wood-framed stable at 55 Heath Street. The property lines of 55 Heath and the abutting property to the right have been evened out. Fenwick Street still terminates at Heath. Bond Street has been renamed Jacques Street as it rounds the curve. The Langmaid residential building (1892-1893) has been constructed at the corner of Fenwick and Broadway (the pink portions of the building indicate brick construction while the additions at the rear are yellow and, therefore, wood-framed).

Census and City Directory data show that only two families owned 55 Heath Street for 100 years. The earliest record of the McKim family at the property is James A. McKim in 1895. McKim is listed as a milkman in 1895 and 1896. In the 1900 census he is listed as a “proprietor” and a second occupation which is illegible. We don’t know of what McKim was a proprietor. In addition to family, at least two boarders lived with the McKims over the years. It was common for families and widows to take in boarders to help make ends meet.

By 1920, the Jolly family took over ownership of 55 Heath Street. It was from Alexander Jolly’s grandson that 55 Heath was purchased by the current owner in 1995.

The McKims, Jollys and their boarders and renters over the years all held positions common to working and middle-class residents of the City: stenographer, laborer, teacher, clerks and, eventually, with the advent of the automobile, chauffeur

The above, and additional information is contained in the research table spreadsheet on this property.s.

### **III. FINDINGS ON PREFERABLE PRESERVATION**

*If the Commission determines that the demolition of the significant building or structure would be detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City, such building or structure shall be considered a preferably preserved building or structure. (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 4.2.d)*

*A determination regarding if the demolition of the subject building is detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City should consider the following:*

*How does this building or structure compose or reflect features which contribute to the heritage of the City?*

- a.) *What is the remaining integrity of the structure? The National Park Service defines integrity as the ability of a property to convey significance.*

The carriage barn, despite the introduction of four garage bays, including a left side addition containing one of these bays), clearly retains its Italianate architectural characteristics as well indicators of its carriage barn use.

Staff provides again the assessment of integrity that was provided in the staff report for the Determination of Historic Significance:

**Location:** The carriage barn appears to be in its original location.

**Design:** The following description was provided in the staff report on Historic Significance:

The structure (carriage barn) that is the subject of the demolition application is a wood-framed, wood-clapboarded 1½-story gable-roofed accessory structure. The gable ends are found at the right and left elevation of the building and present deep gable returns. A substantial cornice and sturdy corner posts frame the building. The front façade sports a center gabled peak. It is the center gabled peak along with the deep gable returns and roof pitch that identify the structure’s style as Italianate.

The left elevation presents a double-hung 6x6, wood-muntined window centered between the gable returns. The right elevation presents two double-hung, 6x6, wood-muntined windows: one at the first story and one centered between where the gable returns were once present. The front façade presents a hay door under the center gabled peak. The first floor of the front façade has been divided into four garage bays. Three of these bays are located on the original body of the house. The left-most bay is located in a single-story, shed-roofed

later addition to the structure.

**Materials:** Wood-frame construction; wood clapboarding; later modern garage doors (appear to be vinyl or metal); wood windows.

**Alterations:** Four modern garage doors; formation of garage bays; left elevation addition to include one of the garage bays.

**Evaluation of Integrity:** The carriage barn retains a high degree of integrity of form, Italianate architectural style and building components (including, but not limited to, center gable, strong gable returns, hay loft door, roof pitch). Despite the garage bay alterations and the left shed addition, the structure still reads as an Italianate carriage barn.

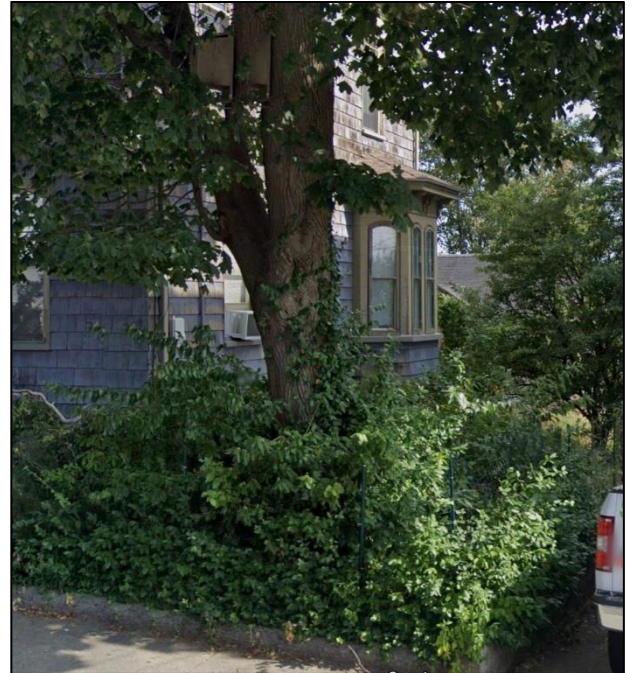
***What is the level (local, state, national) of significance?***

Local significance.

***What is the visibility of the structure with regard to public interest (Section 2.17.B.ii) if demolition were to occur?***

Portions of this structure are visible from the public way of Heath Street. The left addition and the left side gable are visible when looking down the left side of the property from Heath Street. The right side gable and a portion of the center gable are visible when viewing the property along the right elevation from Heath Street, both when the deciduous tree in the side yard is in full leaf and during the months when the tree is devoid of foliage in the late fall and winter months. See photos below.





*Above, left and right: view to right gable end and portion of center gable from Heath Street.*

*Bottom, right: view to left gable end and addition from Heath Street.*



***What is the scarcity or frequency of this type of resource in the City?***

Center-gable Italianate carriage barns are not common in the City.

***Upon a consideration of the above criteria is the demolition of the subject building detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City?***

Staff offers no assessment on this criterion.

### **III. RECOMMENDATION**

Staff offers no recommendation regarding whether the carriage barn should or should not be “preferably preserved”.



